

Pfister Notes La. Subversion

Private Investigators' Applications Heard

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—Chairman James Pfister of a new legislative committee on un-American activities said Wednesday his group wanted to inform Louisiana there are subversive influences in this state. "We feel the people just don't believe it," he said.

The 10-man committee organized here, naming the New Orleans state representative chairman and Sen. Samuel Broussard of New Iberia vice-chairman.

The new group, created in the 1960 Legislature, heard applications from private investigators seeking committee assignments, made no decision, and drafted committee rules of procedure.

One applicant, Guy Banister, former assistant New Orleans private investigator, told the lawmakers Louisiana Negro sit-ins were led by white leftwingers.

"The Negro race is not capable of the leadership or organization for sit-ins," Banister said. "It is white people. And I might add, the Negro race never has produced a great criminal, either."

Banister said the committee on racial equality operates out of New York City and is behind

troubles caused by colored students in the South.

LETTER HEAD

New Orleans police, acting under a new state law, broke up recent sit-in demonstrations.

Chairman Pfister did not mention racial issues.

He said, "We want the people of Louisiana to know we're working for their benefit, and our committee will let them know what we are doing."

During an open session, Sen. Wendell Harris, Baton Rouge, vice-chairman of the state sovereignty commission, pledged full co-operation and offered use of the commission staff.

Pfister read a letter of congratulations from Festus J. Brown, New Orleans, chairman of the un-American activities committee of the Louisiana American Legion, also offering assistance.

PROSPECTS MENTIONED

Brown appeared in person to offer Legion co-operation.

"The informed and thinking citizens of Louisiana," his letter said, "are prayerfully and anxiously looking forward to effective and determined operations by this splendid committee. . . . through this committee, Louisiana has joined with honor a growing list of sister states. . . ."

The American Legion letter mentioned several men as prospects for investigators, Banister, Atty. Guy Johnson of New Orleans and atty. Guy Johnson of New Orleans and atty. Jack N. Rogers of Baton Rouge, and

George Schultz of the Caddo parish sheriff's office.

HEARINGS CONDUCTED

Rep. George Tessier of New Orleans, a cosponsor of the committee with Pfister, invited applications from all trained investigators. Only Banister personally addressed the committee.

Banister said "there has been no real exposure of subversive influences in this state, although the joint committee on segregation in the past did some work in that direction."

Several years ago, the segregation committee, then under former Sen. William Rainach of Homer, conducted hearings seeking Communistic influence behind racial unrest.

Tessier told the committee that in the name of doing good, it might "do a tremendous amount of harm to innocent people."

Chairman Pfister said "we want to return to basic principles of Americanism."

The committee held a closed session to discuss general objectives.